

# Employment in Agri-Food Industries

## 2017 Alberta Highlights



Agri-Food Statistics Update: Issue EMP 18-1

### Key Messages

- Based on 2017 annual estimates, 75,100 Albertans were employed in agri-food industries, representing 3.3 per cent of the total provincial workforce (2,286,900 persons).
- Women accounted for 30.8 per cent of Alberta's agri-food employment in 2017.
- Primary agriculture industries employed 52,100 persons, while food and beverage manufacturing industries employed the remaining 23,000.
- In terms of employment, food and beverage manufacturing was the largest industry among all manufacturing industries in Alberta. Food and beverage manufacturing accounted for 19.3 per cent (119,200) of the total provincial manufacturing workforce, in 2017.
- Food processing employment was dominated by meat products industries employing 49.8 per cent (10,400 persons) of total food processing workers (20,900).
- As of December 2017, the province's agri-food industries had 4,007 active businesses with employees, comprising 3,429 in primary agriculture and 578 in food and beverage manufacturing.

### Definitions

The Agri-Food Statistics Update is designed to provide users with commentary on current issues, trends and new developments related to agriculture and the food and beverage processing industries.

The source of the data is Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) which generates detailed information on labour market conditions.

The LFS identifies two categories of workers: employees (those who work as employees of a private firm or business or for the government or public); and the self-employed (working owners of incorporated or unincorporated businesses, farms or professional practices).

Employment figures also refer to unpaid family labour and include both full-time and part-time employment.

Table 1.	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2016	2017	Five-Year Comparison "2017/2013"
	Number of Persons Employed					% Change	% Change	
<b>All Alberta Industries</b>	<b>2,226,200</b>	<b>2,274,600</b>	<b>2,301,100</b>	<b>2,263,800</b>	<b>2,286,900</b>	<b>-1.6</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<b>Total Agri-Food Industries (A+B)</b>	<b>90,700</b>	<b>86,100</b>	<b>89,200</b>	<b>73,200</b>	<b>75,100</b>	<b>-17.9</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>-17.2</b>
- Male	61,600	61,000	61,300	51,900	52,000	-15.3	0.2	-15.6
- Female	29,100	25,100	27,900	21,300	23,100	-23.7	8.5	-20.6
<b>Agriculture Industries (A)</b>	<b>63,400</b>	<b>60,600</b>	<b>62,800</b>	<b>50,800</b>	<b>52,100</b>	<b>-19.1</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>-17.8</b>
- 15 to 24 Years of Age	5,700	7,400	11,600	6,400	8,600	-44.8	34.4	50.9
- 25 to 54 Years of Age	31,600	30,400	27,700	22,900	23,900	-17.3	4.4	-24.4
- 55 Years and Over	26,100	22,800	23,500	21,500	19,500	-8.5	-9.3	-25.3
- Animal Production Industries	29,000	28,200	33,800	26,600	27,900	-21.3	4.9	-3.8
- Cattle Ranching and Farming	17,600	16,500	17,600	16,600	17,400	-5.7	4.8	-1.1
- Crop Production Industries	26,900	24,800	18,600	20,500	18,900	10.2	-7.8	-29.7
- Oilseed and Grain Farming	12,300	11,700	8,600	13,100	8,300	52.3	-36.6	-32.5
- Mixed Farming	3,900	5,400	6,800	1,500	2,900	-77.9	93.3	-25.6
- Support Activities for Agriculture	3,500	2,200	3,700	2,300	2,300	-37.8	0.0	-34.3
<b>Food and Beverage Manufacturing</b>	<b>27,400</b>	<b>25,500</b>	<b>26,400</b>	<b>22,400</b>	<b>23,000</b>	<b>-15.2</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>-16.1</b>
- Food Industries	25,500	22,700	24,600	20,400	20,900	-17.1	2.5	-18.0
- Meat Products Industries	11,200	9,300	10,800	11,300	10,400	4.6	-8.0	-7.1
- All Other Food Industries	14,300	13,400	13,800	9,100	10,500	-34.1	15.4	-26.6
- Beverage Industries	1,900	2,800	1,800	2,000	2,100	11.1	5.0	10.5

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0023-01 and Custom Request

## Alberta Agri-Food Employment Increased in 2017

In 2017, Alberta's agri-food industry employed 75,100 persons, up 2.6 per cent from the previous year (see Table 1).

This industry ranked the fourteenth largest among the sixteen major industries. Wholesale and retail trade was the largest industry with 335,000 persons or 14.6 per cent, followed by health care and social assistance (274,100 persons or 12.0 per cent) and construction (241,000 persons or 10.5 per cent).

The employment increase in agri-food industries was due to gains in both primary agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing industries. The primary agriculture industry grew 2.6 per cent to 52,100 persons, while the food and beverage manufacturing industry rose 2.7 per cent to 23,000 persons.

Although Alberta's agri-food industries showed a slight recovery in 2017 in comparison to 2016, the employment level was still 10.3 per cent lower than

the five-year average of 82,860 persons (2013-2017). Despite this trend, the province's agri-food industries continue to see economic growth.

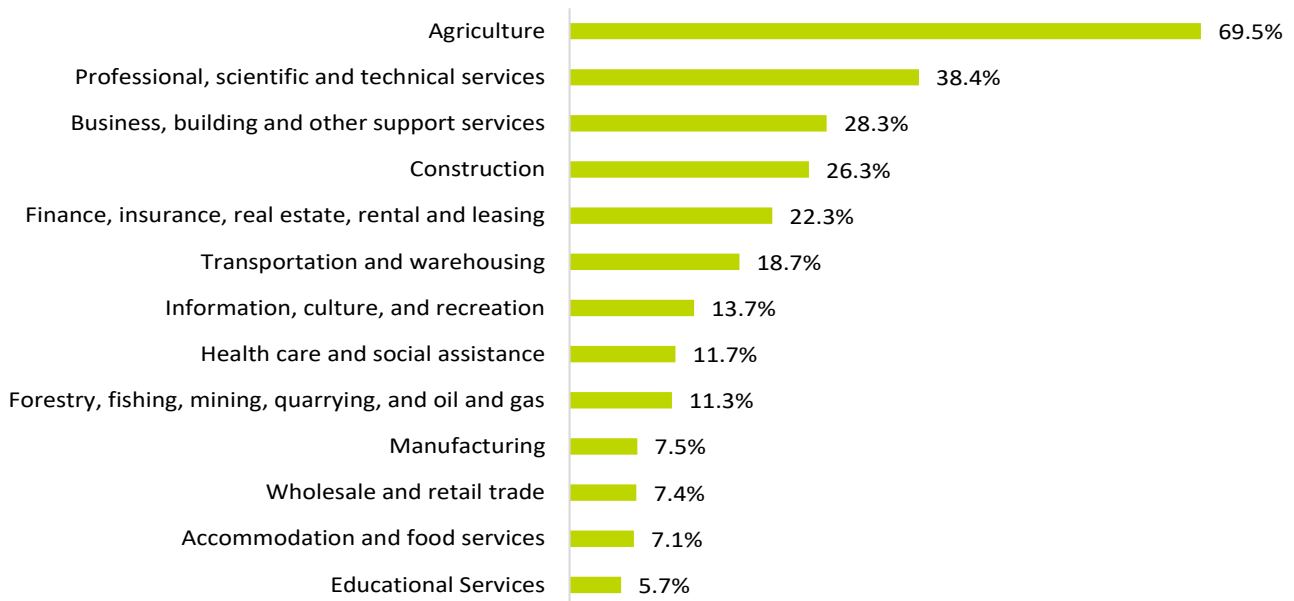
Factors such as the adoption of new technologies, industry mechanization and labour availability will continue to influence agri-food employment.

## Agriculture Has the Highest Rate of Self-Employment

In 2017, there were 36,200 self-employed persons in Alberta's agriculture industry out of the 52,100 working in this industry. This represented 69.5 per cent of the industry's workforce and the highest rate of self-employment across all industries in the province (see chart 1).

Professional, scientific and technical services ranked second with a rate of self-employment of 38.4 per cent, while business, building and other support activities ranked third at 28.3 per cent.

**Chart 1. Self-Employment as a Percentage of Total Alberta Employment in 2017**



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0027-01

The province's agriculture industry also had the third highest rate of self-employment in Canada, after Saskatchewan (79.4 per cent) and Manitoba. (70.4 per cent). Nationally, there were 167,800 self-employed persons in agriculture, accounting for 60 per cent of the Canadian agriculture employment (279,500 persons).

## Alberta's Overall Labour Market Improved in 2017

Alberta's labour market improved following two years of economic downturn. In 2017, total provincial employment grew 1.0 per cent to 2,286,900 persons and the unemployment rate fell to 7.8 per cent, from 8.1 per cent in 2016.

Women accounted for 45.5 per cent of total employment in the province, slightly below the national average of 47.7 per cent.

For people aged 55 years and older, employment increased 3.2 per cent to 438,200 persons, the highest percentage gain among other demographic groups.

Employment among people aged 25 to 54 increased 1.2 per cent to 1,554,900 persons, while employment among those aged 15 to 24 declined 3.1 per cent to 293,800 persons

On a percentage basis, the leading industries in employment growth were transportation and warehousing (up 6.3 per cent), utilities (up 6.1 per cent) and public administration (up 5.5 per cent).

As of December 2017, there were 175,921 active businesses with employees in Alberta, accounting for 13.8 per cent of Canada's total (1,270,783).

### For more information:

Please visit the Agriculture and Forestry website:  
<https://www.agric.gov.ab.ca>

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